

Gilsonite Industry – Part 1

Tape 069

Senior Citizens - Uintah County Historical Society - History Trip - Southeastern Uintah County – Ghost Towns: Dragon, Watson, Rainbow, and Gilsonite Industry in the early Twentieth Century.

Group Leaders: George Long, Donald Howe

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Tape made by Mike Brown of the Golden Age Center.

Interviewer: Dorothy Robinson.

Transcribed by Janet Taylor; Uintah County Library Regional History Center, April, 2001.

George Long (George) and various others: The Rainbow camp was here in the late thirties. These old rock buildings over here, some of them were built in 1904 and 1905. When they started working at Dragon, they also mined here and shipped it to Dragon—freighted it to Dragon on the railroad. There was mining going on here at the same time. These veins—one is a drop off the hill, it's one of the bigger ones, called the "Cowboy" vein. They run anywhere from over twenty feet wide to a fraction of an inch.

This vein here is called the "Independent," or some of them used to call it the "Ice-house" vein. Back before they had refrigerators, why, they had an ice-house, and they kept their ice in it. That Gilsonite is a fine preservative to keep ice from melting. It's an insulation. Then on up through there, over into the Little Bonanza camp, the regular Bonanza vein is south of here a couple of hundred yards parallel. These veins, some of them had areas that they figured were better than others. Right where the washing plant is, that's the building to the left over there, was the old Number 2 shaft. They always figured that was the best ore. Also, at the same time, it was where they had several explosions.

These shafts, they numbered them from Number 2, 2 ½, right on through to 14, then they were what they called 20 and 21, and 29 and 30. That was from here to the top of the hill. Back this way, they open-cut it. It was one of those open cuts that blew up in 1953 and killed those eight fellows.

Don: It was right up behind this hill, right up on the main, right above here.

George: Yes, there was one mine right there, alongside of the road, that they used to call Mae West, and I asked Ray Chivers one time, I said, "How come they called that Mae West?" And he said, "Because it had so many curves." So these guys, they had names for a lot of these mines, like Don said. Each one of them had a name. Like Bandanna, and EB, and WQ, and so on and so forth. When you get up around Rainbow, why, there were several of them there, and I'll go through the names that they tacked on to them. But it's kind of unique, because every one had a name, either a name or a number. This area here, by the camp, it was in 1945, where they had the big explosion and they thought for a while that it was going to destroy the camp. Some of the

people left, like Miles Hall, and never came back.

Don: They showed me some pictures of it, coming out, even down to the office building, where the timbers come right down through, right there in the office, right through the ceiling and laid right there on the floor. All over the place.

George: It started in the old Number 2 shaft, and went clear through every shaft, from 2 to 14. And they were all burning and exploding, and the people that came out here that night could drive down the bench without car lights on because of the light from the fire coming from these 14 shafts.

Unknown: They could see that light, clear up to Sunbeam.

Don: You can see that it traveled through from one hole to the other—got a draft...

Unknown: Was that in '53?

George: No, that was in '45. The one that killed the men was in '53.

Unknown: How did they put the fire out?

George: It burned out and they brought in bulldozers and filled it in, smothered a lot of it out. The Gilsonite Industry started over at Gusher, prior to 1890, in about 1887. It dropped down to what they called "Ariette's" south of Myton. But this didn't start over in here until nineteen...Well, in 1903 they built the railroad, started building it, and when they knew they were going to build a railroad, then they started setting camps up. They built a camp at Dragon, right at the mine, and they were to have the mine and the ore ready for the railroad when it got there. So a lot of these places were just serviced by team and buggy until the railroad came in. The Little Emma mine, over southwest of here, operated for many, many years. I guess it still is. It was a real narrow thing, but very, very good ore.

Don: It was deeper than most any others in the area. Eleven hundred feet or something like that.

George : Yes.

Unknown: The power companies use it for paint and for insulation or to make other things.

Unknown: How could the explosion develop in an open-cut vein? That's right where...

George: Well, it contains so many gases, called methane gas, plus this here stuff contains everything that's in oil. So, the dust from this is just the same as gasoline.

Don: Just like gasoline. You come out of the mine at night, take some in your fist, and light a

match, and “Whoosh!” Just like that.

George: What they think that happened was that they probably hit a little gas pocket where they would be setting off these charges. They used dynamite for a while, and then they tried tar-daub, like they use in mines, or in coal mines, but they figured that would probably ignite, and then with just enough of a jar to loosen up that dust, and then the dust would really take a-hold, and that’s what created the huge explosion.

Unknown: Well, you know, they use Gilsonite for an explosive now.

George: I guess so. I think they even use it for...

Unknown: Yes, all these open pit mines like Bingham.

Don: Don’t they use mostly...

George: Well, you see, I worked in a lab here for about eight years, and we used to have to test every shipment of Gilsonite that went out to make sure of its specifications. I checked out a shipment of ten thousand tons that went to New Zealand to their open-pit mines. You know, that’s what they were using it for, was just for blasting in their open-pit mines.

Unknown: It has tremendous heat.

George: On that deal I had to make a test on every car-load that came out, so I made a lot of tests on that. That’s American Gilsonite. It used to be Barber Asphalt. Barber was a big company prior to when Standard Oil bought in with Barber. And now, I guess, Standard Oil holds it all.

Little Bonanza was called American Asphalt. Then there was Standard Gilsonite, which was at Little Emma, and two or three other smaller ones. Ziegler now has Little Bonanza, and then there was Messacnacola over to Castle Peak for a while, and they quit. But I think of all the industry in the Uintah Basin this has been the most stable, and the one with the longest range – it’s been the Gilsonite.

Don: Steady payroll.

George: Yes. A lot of people have worked in it. I was going to mention, this is great sheep country. There were four shearing plants in here and I’ll tell you, if you had a penny for every pound of wool that had been sheared over here at Coyote Basin, where you cross that little creek, you’d never have to worry the rest of your life.

Unknown: I’ve sheared over there.

Unknown: Have you?

Unknown: Back in those days, too, they'd take my entire outfit of lambs. Just couldn't bring them in fast enough.

George: Oh, there were lots of sheep. A big plant on White River, and one at Watson, and then another one on up to Dragon even, and Livingston, and old ?, probably the largest outfits. In fact, ?'s was so large that if he'd have so desired, he could have kept the railroad running for a while. He had I don't know how many herds of sheep out in that country.

Unknown: Well, Livingston had eleven of them.

George: Oh, he was huge. You bet. Well, Joe Hacking, you know, he ran a lot. Stringham – not Stringham, but Siddoway – yes, Stringham had sheep out here. You bet.

Don: He was a little farther over.

George: Banks and McCoy, and all of them. They were just... Well, Banks used to run right back here, part of the time. And he owned this down here on the river, where the old stage station is.

Don: He did.

George: Well, why don't we go on then, to the river, then we'll stop there.

Unknown: What's...

Don: That's the old stage station. Yes.

Unknown: Oh, was this on the reservation?

Don: I don't think this was.

Unknown: Just curious how far it went over this way.

George: What's that?

Unknown: Was this reservation at one time?

George: Well, they've got ground in here. Right down here on the river, some of that is Indian ground right now. So, I don't know. It kind of followed the White River.

Unknown: Yes. I know they were over by Rainbow.

George: Yes.

[Pause]

Don: . . . Going half each way. You think around three dollars. The road was built by the Uintah Railroad Company and they charged a toll to drive over it.

George: Yes, it's still there.

Don: And I'll tell you, in them days it was hard to rake up that three dollars when you had to go to town.

George: Yes, I spent the winter.

Unknown: They had a monopoly, really. Didn't they?

Don: Yes, they did.

Unknown: Didn't they own part of one of the biggest companies? One of the biggest Gilsonite mines, too, didn't they?

Don: No, well, yes, that Rainbow and everything all belonged to the same company. It was under a different name but it was all the same company.

George: Well, if you'll group around, we'll just kind of have a little briefing here. This was Ignacio, the old toll station on the Uintah Railway, and they run their freight and stage line to Vernal and Ouray from Watson and Dragon. And the houses on the top were houses owned by the company, the caretaker, and the guy that took care of the taking of the tolls lived in the larger one there.

Don: It was a boarding house and rooming house also.

George: Ted Corless took care of it for many years. Now, some of these guys that were up at the Country Boy Mine told me that when they'd get ready to come in on the weekend, why, they would wait until way late at night, in a Model T Ford, and they would come down and they'd make a run for it, and get across the bridge before Mr. Corless would get out. But, he got onto that and he strung a cable across there. So, they quit doing it, all right. Now, on beyond that, you see the two huge high rocks, called Castle Rock. Quite a scenic country, and it's rough way out to the south, there. Now, I batched here for six months, in a tent, on the river, and then when my wife and I got married in '47, we lived for a year and a half over here in one of the cabins that Judge Riggs built. Judge Riggs came from Meeker, Colorado, and he ran a store here for a couple of years. Later on...

Unknown: You wouldn't think there was that much business here, would you?

George: No. Later on, that particular building caught on fire, and there was a lone family down

here in 1965, in January, and five out of the family of eight burned to death in it. Then the wife and I moved into that center cabin up there, and we lived in it for six or seven months. W.A. Banks owned them. I think he still does. John Scott and his wife lived right over here by that tin building, and they took care of the pumps for the mine company. Many of you remember John and Blanche Scott. Very fine people. In fact, he worked for the Uintah Railway, for many years because his father, Ian Gurr, was in charge of the freight operation. We always looked forward to this time of year. The big shearing outfits would come in here and shear when we lived down here, and I don't suppose they do any more because the sheep industry has fell off so bad that this, like Coyote Basin or Watson, was... An awful lot of shearing went on.

Don: There must have been at least a million sheep in this area then, or more than that.

George: Oh, one of the biggest sheep areas in the United States was right here in this area.

Unknown: And you know there isn't anywhere near a million sheep in Utah now.

George: No.

Don: No, not in the whole state now. But I imagine maybe five million would be a lot closer.

George: Another thing that took place back around 1912, that's when this bridge was built, 1912, but the main road before that went up to the east of here and crossed.

Don: About a mile and a half or two miles, come right by the end of that creek.

Unknown: Did they have a ford up there?

George: Well, they had a bridge. It washed out, then they moved here. They did ford it, when the bridge went out, from the time it went out until when they built this one. Mr. Scott said it was about a year and a half lapse in there, that they forded.

Unknown: Well, now, did they go from that station here then up to that bridge?

George: Yes. Right down this canyon. It was called Wagon Hound.

Don: Well, now, I believe John Scott was also up at that station when this bridge was up above.

George: Yes.

Don: It was there when I came out here in 1916.

George: Is that right?

Don: Yes.

Unknown: I understood this next draw up here was called Wagon Hound.

George: No, this was the Wagon Hound, the old famous Wagon Hound. Every time there would come a cloud-burst it would take it, even though they had gotten that road fixed up good now. If you get a cloud-burst in the summer...

Don: They'll fix it again.

George: You bet they will. Then on up to the White River, about three miles, it's called the Old Uintah Oil Shale. Ivan Jacobson told me that his dad freighted that stuff in there and the old boilers and some of it is still there.

Don: Now, that would be Luvie.

George: Luvie. L.O. Jacobson. And then over on Rabbit Mountain is another one. And there are several of them, off through the country, and they built rock houses, and furnaces, and stuff like that, and there was a big manipulation going on. A lot of people lost a lot of money in stocks in them.

Don: In the camps they built some houses. There are some houses right across from that First Ward chapel, they just tore down—just over west there—some of those homes were up here on this hill here, right up on the point, and they had to...

George: It's a railroad track. Family.

Don: But up at that Watson shale plant, up west of Watson, we're speaking of there, they made the oil, and refined it into gasoline, and run their cars and things on it there. But they did refine it, and produced it there and refined it, but it was too expensive. They quit that.

George: Yes, and another one up beyond Dragon, called Urado. Right on the line between Utah and Colorado, so they called it Urado.

Don: They've got a well up there.

George: Yes. It oozed out of the doggone rocks. They had a pipe, I remember seeing it oozing out of there. You know, it was almost to where it would run just out in the hot sun.

Don: I know they had oil up there. Just shortly after my marriage I went up there to Huntington, and there was a fellow up there in the Westing outfit, and they shipped some oil in and gave us some coal. They had some refined oil up there, too. He gave us all the oil we wanted, to take back home.

George: I don't know. I've been reading about it, I assume it's out here by Evacuation Wash, which we'll come to pretty quick, but...

Don: Which was that?

George: That plant, that they're talking of building now.

Don: Oh.

George: I don't know.

Don: Is that Duck Rock, sticking out there, is that oil shale?

George: Yes. That's another thing...

Unknown: Yes, that's oil shale too. That's Gilsonite. That's where they're working on this –

George: ? mentioned it. That's Duck Rock. You betchyou. That's –

Don: There's a rock out here, that before you get to it and look at it, it looks like a duck sitting there.

George: It'll be between here and the top, where you drop in the back.

Don: What is it, that then you look at it another way and it's Washington – the head of Washington?

Unknown: How old is that other bridge that we –

Don: The one we were talking about?

George: Up here?

Unknown: Yes.

George: Well, it went out in 1911. Washed out. In fact, it went out once before that and they rebuilt it, and then in 1911 it went out, so the following year they built this one here.

Don: One of these rocks looks just like one of these Arabian castles. It's got a door in it, a red wall, that comes down on this roof, shaped just exactly like one of those.

Unknown: What is the range like, now the condition of the range, as opposed to when they were

running a million sheep out here?

George: Not much different really. I mean, they talk about how the sheep and that depleted the range, but you know, the range was quite good back then.

Unknown: Well, the range is good right now.

George: It's good now. We really commented, the wife and I, how good it looked up there in the Dead Man Bench country. It didn't make that much difference.

Don: They just ran the sheep; they didn't have the assignment or lease from the government, they just ran their sheep. If you were there first, it was your ground. And some of the Greeks from Greece came here and run sheep, and they lived right by the sheep. They didn't have any property at all. And then they departed and went back to Greece. Then when they started getting this here, Bureau of Land Management, at Utah Grizzly Ridge, to start with, then you started having your land so you could raise feed for winter time for part of your stock, they started to —

Unknown: They don't give us credit for having —

Unknown: Just about like what it was.

George: By golly, Jones had a big bunch of sheep up in here, and Banks, and CS. CS. built up some.

Mike Brown: So this ground would support a large herd now?

George: Yes, when it was winter range. They would bring them in and winter them here, and then stay until about now, then they would move them on.

Unknown: Where would they take them then?

George: Well, fellows like CS., and Banks, and Jones, took theirs this way up into Colorado. And Stringhams and Siddoways, of course, worked them on back on Diamond, then they'd stay on Diamond for the spring months, and then the first of July they would head to the higher country for the summer range. They had three ranges, you know, that they would run the sheep in.

Don: They had that country up there west of Watson, too. When they were taking up claims on this oil shale, and with an assessment they could get it patented, and they had a lot of patented ground that was their own, then, to graze on. I remember that.

George: But, Lafe Bowen (?) had a huge ranch. It was up White River — not White River, but up between White River and the Colorado River, up in what's called Walcott and Eagle, and up in there, you know. But he'd bring them down here to winter them. And McCoys. Another outfit

that all of you, or many of you, are familiar with is Brewer's. A lot of us used to call it Brewer Country from here on – or from Rainbow on south. Frank Brewer owned a huge amount of ground out there. Brewer was quite a man. He had a big holding, and then he sold out. Don and Harry Hill, I guess, own most of it, don't they?

Unknown: Why did they call him the "wolf man"?

Don: Because he was a wolf.

Unknown: Okay.

George: He lost his first wife when he was, I guess, quite a young man yet, you know. So, he was a wolf.

Unknown: Too many girls –

George: Mr. Brewer had a wreck one night. He had an old four-wheel, and the only way you could get to his place, was either on horseback, or wagon, or a four-wheel drive, back then, and four-wheel drives were just coming out, and he had an old Army one. He had run off the road over here, what they called Powder Wash, and he climbed back up on the road and two or three cars went by, and they wouldn't pick him up because they thought he was someone drunk, you know. Finally he caught a ride. He was hurt real bad. Caught a ride into Bonanza, and they got him to the doctor. But I've had quite a few talks with Mr. Brewer, and he was a good man.

Mike Brown: Well, now, this ranch up the back, that Gentrys are on, how long have Gentrys had that?

George: Oh, Gentrys have been there about thirty-five years. Vic Karren had it for a while, but part of when Vic Karren had it was a fellow – I only knew him as "Dad" Smith. He had it, and he had a boy that got killed in the war, and after that boy got killed, why he sold the ranch, and Vic Karren bought it. And then, Gentrys, whether they bought it from Vic Karren, I don't know, but they've had it about thirty-five years.

Don: Well, they get their water from up there in from the Columbine. It's a right good picnic ground there.

George: Beautiful lake there.

Don: Yes, there is.

George: In fact, the old railroad had special tank cars and they'd haul that drinking water in –

Don: That's how we would get our water down here in Rainbow and Watson, too.

George: And they'd put up ice up there, and bring ice down in the summer. Plus they'd run excursion trains on special occasions like the Fourth and Twenty-fourth of July, and they'd load up the camp, and up there they'd go, and the Indians with them, and they'd have big blow-outs.

Don: I know we went from Watson with a group like that up there on the back of Classen. And then they'd drop us off there, and they'd get on them push-cars, and them Greeks would run those push-cars over the creek, and hanging over, and they'd come down that hill, and we'd picnic up there at that Columbine.

George: Yes. Quite a place. You know, one of the men that was the best-briefed on it that I like to talk to was W.A. Banks. We rented that cabin. It was kind of a hard-looking cabin, but we had it fixed up pretty darn nice. Two dollars and a half a month, was what the rent was on it. And Ivan and Mable Jacobsen rented the big one and they paid three. But we'd help him with his sheep every [spring]. He'd always be short some sheep, so every spring we'd help him, and run them sheep in, you know, and he'd give us three dollars a head. And we'd always get enough sheep in to pay our rent well in advance.

I was working up at Bonanza. I would drive back and forth. I had quite an experience one morning. The shepherd had come over to another camp to visit, and on his way back, he got stuck and he had exhausted himself, given himself out, so as he was walking to Bonanza, he fell dead in the road up there. And Lyle Goodrich came along. In fact, I think he was with him. So, Lyle came running on up the road, and as I was coming home that morning from work, Lyle said, "my buddy's dead." He didn't want to go back with me. So we went back, and he was dead all right, you know, and I said to Lyle, I said, "Well, you sit here by him," because they were right on a turn, in that deep wash, "in case a car comes, and I'll go call the sheriff." And so I went and called Herb Snyder. The county coroner at that time was Dr. Stevens, and when I came back down, Lyle had climbed up on one of those high points a hundred yards away from the body. And he was – Well, I was going to...

Pause in conversation. George Long is speaking when the tape begins again.

George: It's a long way from Vernal, and a long way from Roosevelt. A lot of bootlegging went on up there.

Mike Brown: I just wondered if they ever supplied Vernal?

George: No, Vernal had their own sources. There was an awful lot of it in Vernal.

Mike Brown: Pretty much isolated, this area and the mines?

Unknown: Yes. They had their stills and that up here, did they?

George: Yes. By Dragon. Fellow named George Vaughn ran one up what's called Whiskey Creek. That's how it got its name, Whiskey Creek. And there were two or three others around, you know.

Unknown: Didn't Paul Daniels bootleg a lot too?

George: I know there was a lot of bootlegging went on. I've heard Lafe Richardson talk about it, you know, and he said he had more than he could do around Vernal, outside of running around here.

Unknown: And then Lafe was one of the first ones that got caught after he got out of law enforcement!

George: Is that right? I remember one time Daley left some home brew in a ditch for my dad to pick up. I was just a little shaver, but I don't know – it was a long time ago, and I went up there with Dad, and I heard Dad and my uncle talking. They said, "Well VanTassell said he'd leave it along here somewhere." And they were poking along in the ditch, and they finally found it. Yes, sir, that's been a long time ago. I was about six, seven, or eight years old, along in there, you know, back about 1930 or whatever it was.

Don: Yes, I've known some sheepmen that made some.

George: Charlie Moss used to make a little over there, the old blacksmith.

George: Yes, sir. Daley and I were neighbors. I grew up a short distance from where Daley lived.

Unknown: Old-timers are about all gone.

Unknown: Well, let's see. Is Nora your sister?

George: Yes, she's my oldest sister.

Another pause in conversation, the men are now looking at photographs.

Don: I can remember when it looked like that.

George: Yes, this was taken back when it was horse-and-buggy days.

Mike Brown: We're still at the White River Station. The Indians still have a forty-acre tract just east of the location here, and a Judge Hicks, or Wicks, took a ninety-nine-year lease and built a store here, and he supplemented his income quite a bit bootlegging whiskey to the Indians.

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO:

Don: The warehouse was here, and the stables for the teams, they were stalls over on the edge of that bank over there. Oh, you weren't there when I was showing them one of the houses. The road used to go up this canyon to Rainbow. It was just a little narrow one, just enough room for one car. There were only a few places you could pass so they'd just back up into one of the corners, just like this. Once there was a head-on collision over there. It follows the railroad grade up to Rainbow from here.

Mike Brown: Was this the road here, or the railroad?

Don: Yes, the railroad was right in here.

Unknown: Oh, I thought it was over there.

Don: No, that was where a building set, over there. Oh, well, the warehouse was here, then the railroad came right down along here. Then the houses were ?. There were some pictures here at the last meeting. There were a bunch of nice white frame houses over there. I lived in one of them. Banks lived in one, and my daddy-in-law lived in the other one, when I was out here.

Mike Brown] Who was your daddy-in-law?

Don: Luvie Jacobsen. And then across the street they had some houses over here and then the ice-house. When they talk about packing in the Gilsonite, they had to bring it on the other side of the road about where that tree is, over in there, where they packed it, and then everybody'd get their ice. They'd issue out a piece of ice every day, as long as it lasted, and then on this side of the track they had a cistern there, where everybody'd get their water out of this one cistern. Dip it out with a bucket, carry it to the house. They'd haul it from the foot of the mountain up here.

Unknown: The Gilsonite weighed about three hundred pounds a sack.

Unknown: Yes, those were big sacks.

Don: The little tree bruises, two-ten to two-twenty five, and the big bruise went up to three hundred pounds.

Discussion about telephone service

George: Charlie Neal ?. It was independent then—there wasn't any Bell System like there is now

— and Charlie Neal set it up. My sister was an operator for him, for a while, and the Winklers had a — I think they ran a boarding house.

Unknown: Did that run from Vernal or from here to Vernal?

Don: Well, Charlie Neal brought the telephone system into Jensen, our first phones. I don't know — I can't remember what year that was. But I was just a youngster.

George: Yes. Well, Lou Timothy helped work on it, and then Lou told me that when they tore it up, why, he came out and gathered up most of the wire. But a lot of shearing went on here, and then like I say, this was the end of the line. From here on it was all stage and freight from here on into Vernal. They had a "Y" down here, they called it, and the line ran on up to Rainbow, and then down to American Switch, which was the last portion of the railroad that was built.

Don: ? used to shear a lot of sheep here.

George: Did he?

Don: Yes, he had about ten thousand head of sheep at one time.

George: Oh, there was a lot of them, weren't there.

Don: I think there were either thirty-eight or forty shearers here.

George: Luvie Jacobsen had a fleet of trucks. White trucks. And he hauled Gilsonite from Bonanza and Little Emma, and put it on the train, and then they hauled a lot of wool from Coyote Basin and put on the train here. They were partners and then they split up. Mr. Banks took his money, and went into the sheep business, and Mr. Jacobsen stayed in the trucks. Mr. Banks worked for the railway company for over thirty years.

Many of you may have heard of Elzy Lay, who ran with Butch Cassidy. Mr. Banks said that after Lay got out of the New Mexico State Prison, why he came to Dragon and stayed there at the hotel for three or four nights, and he said that there were so many people flocking around to see him, why he finally moved on, you know. But he was a pretty famous man. And it was said he was instrumental in locating the Hiawatha oil field. That he knew of that.

Unknown: Up in Wyoming?

George: Yes.

Unknown: Was part of the town up there?

George: Yes. It just ran right along in here. They had a lot of trails here. Some of these old posts that are up there now, up there, are remainders of them. They loaded a lot of sheep and cattle on

the trains. Jacobsen said there were about ten or twelve families that lived here year-round, plus the people that ran the store and the hotel and stuff like that. They went to school up at Rainbow. They had the school at Rainbow, and there was no school here.

Unknown: How far is it from here to Rainbow?

George: Five miles.

Don: They used to have school up there in an old red dwelling, up there, it's kind of an apartment house. You can see where the little darkness is on the hill right there. I helped build their school there, I and Lon Black. And then I was assigned to be custodian after we got it built. They give me seven and a half a month. I saw that they had fire and wood, and cleaned up every day. I was going to school at the same time.

George: Well, they must have done away with it because Dick Jacobsen said he went to Rainbow to school; there was no school here when he was a lad.

Don: That's right. When he was a lad, because when we got married he was kind of a baby then, but when they lived here, he was just a baby, when his folks lived here. I know he'd crawl up that hill there and try to pull our kids, and then he'd come back to my mother and say, "Dada, back-ache." But at that time that he was around here, why, that's right, they didn't have a school here then. They did have a school at Rainbow. They still had their school at Rainbow when I left there, and the school there would only pay half of the teacher's wages.

George: Was there a cemetery here, Don, or was the cemetery just at Dragon?

Don: There probably was one here, but nevertheless, the fellows who had children going to school, they would have to pay the other half of the schoolteacher's wages. And it cost about nine dollars each month there. Each of us paid the schoolteacher. The next year I was going to have two kids going to school, so they were going to charge me eighteen dollars, and I just couldn't raise it. Finally they gave me a job in town, in one of ?'s shops. It was only two or three days a week, and I was working at ?'s shop during the weekend, so they gave me a job right here. I would have starved to death if I'd have left here, so I never even went in the house. I jumped out and ran home and told Mr. Porter I was going to leave. He said, "I knew it, I knew it. I knew if you messed around in that shop you'd quit your job here." Of course, I was their blast-man, and I realized why they made me the blast-man. Because I didn't know ?

But they took me over to the shop and fixed me up with everything right off the bat, like I was quite a good blast-man. They were getting teams to hoist and machinery to do it with, and now there was mechanic work for everybody out there, for sheepherders and everybody, and I was the only one to fix it. So they were going to have me for their mechanic, see, and that's why he didn't want me to leave. But that's when I left there. Why, he never did like me any more. And then he wouldn't give me another job at that company, and then he was retired and they got a new superintendent out here, and that superintendent made me master mechanic out here at Bonanza. He inquired of one of the boys that worked out here about me, you know, and he said

that I was the master mechanic for them, and he gave me the job.

George: I've got a picture at home; I didn't bring it with me. There used to be a big bridge across here.

Don: Let's see. At one time there were two bridges there. There was one for the cars and traffic, and there was one for the railroad, side by side, and finally they went out. They went right down through the railroad bridge, and put some runways on the railroad bridge, so you'd drive across the railroad bridge. I have a picture of when the road used to come down that canyon. A fellow named Red Ketchum used to run a store up there. He came down here one time at the end of a flood. He'd waited for the flood to go down, and when the water kind of went down, he started to cross, in his Model T, and it sank down until there was only that much sticking up out of the top. Some people had to get a block and tackle to pull him out.

Unknown: Did they get him out?

Don: Oh, yes, -----

George: Oh, no way of knowing what year it was.

Don: This is a later year, a lot later than when I was here, that that picture was taken.

Unknown: What year were you here?

Don: Oh, I was here from about 1918-19, to in the twenties, the early twenties. Of course, I was up in this area, but the time I left here, when was it? They still had the town here when I left. But then in this picture here, along the creek-bank here they had stables for the teams. That's when they were hauling freight with the teams. And these things here, they would put them... Do you understand that that's the boarding house there? This big warehouse was sitting right here. The store and the boarding house were up on this bank here. Then the shearing corrals up around on top. But that was taken from over in here, I guess. [He is referring to a photograph.]

Unknown: So, did they take a lot of the wool out on the railroad?

Don: Oh, they'd shear up here, and they'd stack it on the hillside up there, and they'd load it on the railroad right here. In other words, they'd put it down on the side of the hill, and sacks would —well, you can see. Oh, that's Gilsonite sacks there, but that's the same area where they'd load the wool. See, the tracks went down there and they'd load the wool there. But this is Gilsonite, there. In fact, these were built after my time, too. They'd load stock there.

George: Well, there, on down this way. In fact, Mr. Banks's house was across the creek, and I think...

Don: No, it was right over here where this big brush is. Well, that's...

George: Well, that's...

Don: Yes, Banks' house was the first one, then my family lived in the next one, and Jacobsen lived in the other one, when I was out here. That was in 1918-19, along in there.

George: They had a school here, then, huh?

Don: They had a school, but they didn't have a schoolhouse. They had an apartment house, just up at the point of that hill there. It was a big red house, and it was an apartment house, and they used a room in there for the school.

George: I know my wife went to school in Rainbow, but that was in the thirties.

Don: Yes, E.B. Heaton's wife taught me there.

George: At Rainbow?

Don: No, right up here. And then after they built this school up here, then my uncle was Barry Hadlock, he married Virginia Steele, they both came here then, and he taught school here and worked in the warehouse, and finally she taught school. He started a Sunday school out here, and that was the first contact they ever had with the church out here. When I was about nine years old I went to church in Vernal there, but when we got here, we didn't have any contact with the church.

George: Well, I guess we're ready to go on to Rainbow.

Discussion about mail-order bricks for the Bank of Vernal.

Mike Brown: Now, the bricks came in here.

Don: This was the end of the railroad, where they unloaded them. They shipped them in boxcars and then on wagons. Some of the first trucks were out here.

Mike Brown: What was that like when you were a kid? They must have had car-loads of them. Of the bricks.

Don: Yes, they did. They were shipped in box-cars, I know. I even helped carry some out of there. They were shipped on wagons from here. Some of the first trucks were out here.

Unknown: How could the ? afford to buy them when prices were so high?

Don: It cost them five dollars in those days. Now, they used a couple of wagons, and maybe four to six horses pulling them. It was about five dollars a hundred, all the way from here to Vernal. Now, how would that work out? They couldn't haul more than...

Mike Brown: Yes, that's twenty hundred. That's what I heard. Some people tell me that was an average load.

Don: Yes, it would be.

Mike Brown: You get more than that and you start tearing up your horses and equipment.

Don: Oh, yes. And those old hills are hard on them too. You'd have to stop and rest ever fifteen minutes. I know when I lived down on White River, that's a good place to stop down there. Why the kids in those days, they'd walk way up the road to beat the teams and to ride on the wagons. Maybe they'd let us hold the reins—six horses, you know, we were really doing something.

Mike Brown: Did they ride what they call the "wheeler"? The wheeler horse, the one on the left.

Don: No, they'd have them in pairs. The wheeler was where they had a third horse. I think that's what they call a wheeler, isn't it?

Unknown: I don't know.

Mike Brown: Someone said that the horse that the guy rides on is the wheeler.

Don: Oh, well, they didn't ride the horses.

Unknown: Did they ship cattle too, on this narrow gauge?

Don: Oh, yes, cattle, sheep, and everything. Mail, freight, groceries, dry goods, everything that went into the town of Vernal would come this way. Over that little, narrow road.

Unknown: Do you know anything about the Indians shipping cattle out?

Don: No, I don't. At that time I didn't know too much about what went on up at Dragon, but as far as I know, I don't know if the Indians in those days around here had any cattle.

Unknown: Where's our next stop?

Don: About four or five miles.

Mike Brown: If you stay on this road does it take you over Baxter?

Don: Yes. No, no! It's where the railroad used to go over to Baxter. But we had to be on the road above to go to Baxter. Now we'll go up to Rainbow, and back down to what's called the Black Virgin Mine, and back into Dragon's road. And from then on, you go on over to Baxter, but we'll come back that way, and come back in...

George: We took up about twenty-five or thirty uranium claims out in here in 1950.

Unknown: People got uranium out of here?

George: Oh, yes, a good showing. It wasn't real strong, but there was a lot of it. And we never went ahead and proved up on it or anything, but anyway, when this oil shale stuff started about five years ago, boy, they sent us all a lot of letters and information that we had no rights, no claim to that oil shale through the uranium claims that we prospected for, you know.

Don: A lot of people have been investing in that oil shale, and some of the women have been inquiring about these holes that they've done the work on. But you know, so many of them never did prove up on it, and had the money to. One of the worst ones, the Stringhams bought it, and...

Unknown: That's not a hand-powered outfit,

Don: That's a shearing machine.

[That last stop was at Watson.]

Don: You go down the tracks and roll that on the ramp, then the railroad track came right around here, and you take those things and roll them off and –

Unknown: So the railroad came just right around under here?

Don: Yes, it used to come just there. Later on they built it on and it went on around and it went way on down the country. See there's Rainbow and it goes straight on through.

Unknown: Yes, I can see.

Unknown: How deep does that [a Gilsonite vein] go?

Don: About three hundred feet. Now, over at Little Emma, where we'll take an historic trip over there one of these times, it goes eleven hundred feet there. Open, just right straight down like a trench. Goes straight down.

Unknown: How much of that's Gilsonite and how much of it is other?

Don: It's all Gilsonite unless there's been a break in the rock. Now sometimes they have what they call a jog, where some of the rocks fall into the Gilsonite and it sets in that Gilsonite and becomes embedded. You have to chop that out before you ship it. Now that's where this kind of stuff comes from.

Unknown: Does this go right on under there?

Don: Yes. It goes all the way. It goes down through; it's mined all the way, but they drift through each hole.

George: As it goes down here, it comes to what's called the Vernal Mine. The Vernal and the Far West mines are about the last ones. It narrows up real narrow at the end. At the China Wall.

Unknown: How deep is it here? Eight feet?

Don: Approximately eight feet.

George: You get over to the Rainbow camp and there's two veins. There's a small vein that sets off to one side.

Don: It's a split, see. The same amount of ore there, but it splits the vein.

George: Besides the one spot that had a big huge derrick, Pardon Nelson said. And that derrick would hoist out of one vein, and swing around and hoist out of the other one.

Unknown: How much did they have to have in order to work it?

George: Just wide enough to swing a pick in, some of them.

Unknown: What about these?

Don: On down below here there's already these same veins that they belong to the Utah Gilsonite Company down there. I worked in there when I was fifteen years old. You'd have to stand like this, it was so narrow, with your pick. Me and little old—I don't know if any of you knew Steve—or not, he was just a little fellow, and I and him would get down there and work. And I was only fifteen years old, and I was down there getting Gilsonite.

Unknown: Is that dangerous?

Don: Oh, yes. And then they built the road up to there, and I was driving a team on a scraper up there when they built the road up on the hill and some of the big chunks come up and about threw me down there. They wouldn't let people work like that now.

Unknown: What was the name of this vein?

Don: I don't remember. I used to remember, but...

George: Well, I thought it was the Rainbow vein, but it started on over here as the Turtle mine. Then the Temple, then there's another one or two in there, and the Thimble Rock, and the Rainbow, and the Magnificent, this is the Sunshine Cat, and then there was China Wall, the Far West, the Vernal...

Unknown: Are those all on the same vein?

George: All on the same vein, there's a little vein south of this one over here, you know, pretty close to the Rainbow camp, but it's called the Rainbow vein. Then there was the Baby; on over south of King's Well, Black Beauty.

Don: When I first started here at Rainbow in 1926, it went right through this hill here. They dug some holes in there, the trench went right through there, I and Luther Gale were first timbering in there. Then later on, during World War II, when they closed some of them down, I and him went on into the places on the other side of this hill. The next day we'd go through to re-timber it. They had the man-ways down there, and we'd tie a rope around each other and take turns letting down and landing. If it fell out from under you, then they'd send the timber down and you'd put another timber in, build it up and go on down that way.

When we got to the bottom, we'd use timbers about that big, and drill them in solid all along there, and put lagging in that, and put that much muck on top of it, and then the men could work underneath there. But nevertheless, there was a big jog about that wide in there, where it jogged in there, and I know it looks awful bad, but I was down in the mine, and I was at the tail end of one of those laggings we had. We had slopes up and it sloped up this way you see, and down in the other end in the floors. We were up on top of one of those slopes just under that lagging there one day, when some of that jog came loose. And boy, you sure liked that cushion of that lagging above you. When it all quit, we hollered at the men—there were two men working down below us—one of them was hoist-man at the time. We hollered down and we couldn't get an answer.

George: Where was the Colorow? Now, the Colorow caught on fire. Lightning struck it.

Don: It's just right on down below here. I got pictures of it.

George: I've got one, too. Lightning struck it and it caught on fire. Then there was one called the Brown Bear, and it was further down. Did you see where that Gilsonite was piled up when we came in? Well, there was a road that went around that way to the old Brown Bear, and they'd haul it there and stack it on a dock there, to load it there on the train.

Don: But, nevertheless, we couldn't get an answer. So little Tommy Thomas was working down

there, so we went down the slope and he was standing there. We said, "Are you all right?" He just stood there and looked at us. Scared to death. And he was as white as a sheet, even though he was black from Gilsonite. We went across the shaft and there was Tommy Shelby working on that side, hoisting out of there. Of course, when it started to fall, naturally he went back to the lagging. They got back right to the edge of it and they had a pile of three sacks, one here, and then one here and one here, on each side that way, and then they put a chain around the trees to hoist them out. He had run right back on that trail between them and he was right on the edge of that and he was laying over that way, and ? right across the back of his neck there and had muck all over him, and I pulled him over and I told my partner, "Well, he's dead." But he wasn't. So we called the hoister to send the basket and when the basket came, we strapped them in and hoisted them out. And Luke, he got in the basket and rode out with him. It was several weeks later before Tommy came to. But he had a head injury, and he died.

George: Well, how did they run the hoist then? With the old Fortune tractors?

Don: Yes, they started to use the Fortune tractors at that time. Or did they?

George: I don't know, they had three or four of them.

Don: No, they were still using horses then.

George: When?

Don: Well, at that time they used horses, but I was here when they were changing over to tractors, that's when I was mining. I had done everything on the job, and I took a mechanical course and I kept everybody's cars up around here.

George: Well, when they were taking it out with horses they couldn't go too deep, because they could only hoist it up maybe a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet. But a lot of it they got right in the doggone... I have pictures showing them right down in the vein with teams, in the wide veins, you know, over there on the Country Boy, or the Cowboy vein.

Unknown: How far before you want to stop?

Don: Shall we go to Rainbow?

George: Well, we can drive up here to ?. Right about here was the end of the railroad, and then they built what was called the American Switch. And it went on down here for two miles. That was the last of the railroads.

Don: They had the siding down there at the Harrison. Then they built it on over here, and it followed the grade right down, and it went way down here by the China Wall, and they built a railroad yard here when...

George: Yes, it was called the American Switch. And Bernice has one of those books that tells that, in that. That was the last extension that was built off of the railroad.

Don: Yes.

George: Well, we can go on up around here and make one more loop, and then come back and go to Rainbow.

Don: Back down where the big cut comes at the bottom.

George: Yes, we can get a good view there.

Don: Yes.

END OF TAPE.